

FOUNDATION BOOSTS MERRIMAC PARK EFFORT  
\$10,000 Donation for Clingman Land Purchase  
For Release February 10, 2003

(Merrimac, WI) - The Bart and Char Olson Foundation has pledged \$10,000 to the Town of Merrimac for the purchase of land on Lake Wisconsin for the purpose of conservation. The donation is the largest received to date and is expected to encourage others to assist in the effort.

Town Chairman Richard Grant called the Olsons to express his gratitude for their generosity. Bart Olson said that the conservation effort was "a very good investment for the entire community." The Olsons own Merrimac Communications, Ltd., a cable and internet service provider for the Merrimac and surrounding area.

The township is seeking to purchase 8.5 acres of property currently owned by Evan Clingman of Pennsylvania. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has already approved the purchase by the DNR of a portion of the property. The town is now working to provide funding for the remaining portion. Once the DNR acquires the Badger Army Ammunitions Plant (BAAP) pump house property, the entire project will include 17 acres of conservation space with 1/2 mile of undeveloped shoreline.

The town plans to submit for a Lake Protection Grant from the DNR which will cover up to 75% of the \$260,000 purchase price. The remaining \$65,000 is being raised through private donations. The town's goal to raise private money for the balance of the purchase would alleviate any need to raise tax revenues. This is an important part of the purchase considering the money needed for the purchase is currently about 40% of the town's current tax levy.

Unlike other major lakes in Wisconsin, such as Castle Rock or Petenwell lakes, Lake Wisconsin does not have a major park area on the lake. Presently, there is a DNR boat ramp at Moon Valley Resort and a Sauk County boat ramp next to Summer Oaks Resort, but neither facility allows people to enjoy a nature hike or provide major access to on-shore fishing access.

The initiative of purchasing land by the Town of Merrimac for conservation is unique in that these projects are generally seen at the county or state level. The township's effort to conserve this property might be one of the first for a local township. While other municipalities (such as cities and villages) and counties often preserve park space it is rarely been seen at the township level. The DNR hopes the success of this project will encourage other townships to follow suit.

The town has authorized recognizing those who make donations to this project by honoring them with a permanent plaque or monument. Donations of \$500.00 or more will qualify for this recognition. Because the donation is being made to a government entity, and for park conservation, donations are tax-deductible. Donors are asked to consult with their tax professional to make certain their donation is in fact eligible.

If you would like to make a donation for this conservation project, you can make your check payable to the "Clingman Property Acquisition Fund - Town of Merrimac, Attn: Tim McCumber, Deputy Clerk/Treasurer, P.O. Box 115, Merrimac, WI 53561.

Inquiries about the project can be made by contacting Tim McCumber at (608) 643-6332 or by email at [mccumber@shopstop.net](mailto:mccumber@shopstop.net).